



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Commissioner for Patents
United States Patent and Trademark Office
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

Rashida A. Karmali, PhD
99 Wall Street,
10th Floor
New York NY 10005

COPY MAILED

JUL 02 2008

OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of :
Karim Asani :
Application No.: 09/523789 :
Filing or 371(c) Date: 03/13/2000 :
Title of Invention: :
SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR :
SAFE FINANCIAL :
TRANSACTIONS IN E.COMMERCE :
:

ON PETITION

This is a decision on the Petition for Revival of an Application for Patent Abandoned Unavoidably Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.137(a), filed May 12, 2008.

This Petition is hereby **dismissed**.

Any further petition must be submitted within TWO (2) MONTHS from the mail date of this decision. Extensions of time under 37 CFR 1.136(a) are permitted. The reconsideration request should include a cover letter entitled "Renewed Petition under [insert the applicable code section]." This is **not** final agency action within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. § 704.

Background

The above-identified application became abandoned for failure to timely and properly reply to the Notice of Allowance and Issue Fee Due, mailed February 4, 2008. The Notice set a non-extendable three (3) month period for reply. No reply having been received, the application became abandoned May 5, 2008.

Applicant files the instant petition and asserts that the delay was unavoidable because the Office action was not received until May 9, 2008. Applicant provides that the Office action was mailed to an incorrect correspondence address.

A Grantable Petition Under 37 CFR 1.137(a)

A grantable petition to revive an abandoned application under 37 CFR 1.137(a) must be accompanied by: (1) the required reply (unless previously filed), which may be met by the filing of

a notice of appeal and the requisite fee; a continuing application; an amendment or request for reconsideration which *prima facie* places the application in condition for allowance, or a first or second submission under 37 CFR 1.129(a) if the application has been pending for at least two years as of June 8, 1995, taking into account any reference made in such application to any earlier filed application under 35 USC 120, 121 and 365(c); (2) the petition fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(l); (3) a showing to the satisfaction of the Director that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(a) was unavoidable; and (4) any terminal disclaimer (and fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.20(d)) required pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(c).

Applicant lacks item (3) as set forth above.

As to item (3), Applicant must provide a showing to the satisfaction of the Director that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(a) was unavoidable. In order to determine whether the delay was unavoidable, the courts have adopted a “reasonably prudent person” standard. The courts have provided that:

[t]he word ‘unavoidable’ . . . is applicable to ordinary human affairs, and requires no more or greater care or diligence than is generally used and observed by prudent and careful men in relation to their most important business. It permits them in the exercise of this care to rely upon the ordinary and trustworthy agencies of mail and telegraph, worthy and reliable employees, and such other means and instrumentalities as are usually employed in such important business. If unexpectedly, or through the unforeseen fault or imperfection of these agencies and instrumentalities, there occurs a failure, it may properly be said to be unavoidable, all other conditions of promptness in its rectification being present.

In re Mattullath, 38 App. D.C. 497, 514-15 (1912)(quoting Ex parte Pratt, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31, 32-33 (1887)); see also Winkler v. Ladd, 221 F. Supp. 550, 552, 138 USPQ 666, 167-68 (D.D.C. 1963), aff'd, 143 USPQ 172 (D.C. Cir. 1963); Ex parte Henrich, 1913 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 139, 141 (1913). In addition, decisions on revival are made on a “case-by-case basis, taking all the facts and circumstances into account.” Smith v. Mossinghoff, 671 F.2d 533, 538, 213 USPQ 977, 982 (D.C. Cir. 1982). Finally, a petition cannot be granted where a petitioner has failed to meet his or her burden of establishing that the delay was “unavoidable.” Haines v. Quigg, 673 F. Supp. 314, 316-17, 5 USPQ2d 1130, 1131-32 (N.D. Ind. 1987).

“The critical phrase ‘unless it be shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that such delay was unavoidable’ has remained unchanged since first enacted in 1861.” Smith v. Mossinghoff, 671 F.2d 533, 538, 213 U.S.P.Q. (BNA) 977 (D.C. Cir. 1982). The standard for “unavoidable” delay for reinstating a patent is the same as the unavoidable standard for reviving an application. See Ray v. Lehman, 55 F.3d 606, 608-609, 34 U.S.P.Q.2d (BNA) 1786, 1787 (Fed. Cir. 1995) (citing In re patent No. 4,409,763, 7 U.S.P.Q.2d (BNA) 1798, 1800 (Comm'r Pat. 1990; Smith v. Mossinghoff, 671 F.2d 533, 538, 213 U.S.P.Q. (BNA) 977 (D.C. Cir. 1982)). The court in In re Mattullath, accepted the standard which had been proposed by Commissioner Hall which “requires no more or greater care or diligence than is generally used and observed by prudent and careful men in relation to their most important business.” In re Mattullath, 38 App. D.C. 497,

514-515 (1912) (quoting Ex parte Pratt, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31, 32-33 (1887)). However, “The question of whether an applicant’s delay in prosecuting an application was unavoidable [will] be decided on a case-by-case basis, taking all of the facts and circumstances into account.”¹ Nonawareness of the content of, or a misunderstanding of, PTO statutes, PTO rules, the MPEP, or Official Gazette notices, does not constitute unavoidable delay.²

The statute requires a “showing” by petitioner. Therefore, petitioner has the burden of proof. The decision will be based solely on the written, administrative record in existence. It is not enough that the delay was unavoidable; petitioner must prove that the delay was unavoidable. A petition will not be granted if petitioner provides insufficient evidence to “show” that the delay was unavoidable.

As to item (3), a showing of non-receipt of an Office action may provide the basis for revival of an application based upon unavoidable delay.

The MPEP provides:

The showing required to establish non-receipt of an Office communication must include a statement from the practitioner stating that the Office communication was not received by the practitioner and attesting to the fact that a search of the file jacket and docket records indicates that the Office communication was not received.

A copy of the docket record where the non-received Office communication would have been entered had it been received and docketed must be attached to and referenced in practitioner’s statement. For example, if a three month period for reply was set in the non-received Office action, a copy of the docket report showing all replies docketed for a date three months from the mail date of the non-received Office action must be submitted as documentary proof of non-receipt of the Office action.

The showing outlined above may not be sufficient if there are circumstances that point to a conclusion that the Office action may have been lost after receipt rather than a conclusion that the Office action was lost in the mail (e.g., if the practitioner has a history of not receiving Office actions). (Emphasis supplied).

MPEP 711.03(c)

¹ Smith v. Mossinghoff, 671 F.2d 533, 538, 213 U.S.P.Q. (BNA) 977 (1982).

² See Smith v. Mossinghoff, 671 F.2d 533, 538, 213 U.S.P.Q. (BNA) 977 (Fed. Cir. 1982) (citing Potter v. Dann, 201 U.S.P.Q. (BNA) 574 (D. D.C. 1978) for the proposition that counsel’s nonawareness of PTO rules does not constitute “unavoidable” delay); Vincent v. Mossinghoff, 1985 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 23119, 13, 230 U.S.P.Q. (BNA) 621 (D. D.C. 1985) (Plaintiffs, through their counsel’s actions, or their own, must be held responsible for having noted the MPEP section and Official Gazette notices expressly stating that the certified mailing procedures outlined in 37 CFR 1.8(a) do not apply to continuation applications.) (Emphasis added).

Analysis

A review of Office records reveals that the Notice was mailed to the correspondence address of record: 99 Wall Street, 13th Floor, New York, NY 10005. Office records do not indicate that a Change of Correspondence Address, changing the correspondence address to 99 Wall Street, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10005, was filed in this application prior to the filing of the Issue Fee Transmittal Form, filed with the present petition on May 12, 2008.

The MPEP states that “[w]here an attorney or agent of record (or applicant, if he or she is prosecuting the application pro se) changes his or her correspondence address, he or she is responsible for promptly notifying the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office of the new correspondence address (including ZIP Code). See 37 CFR 11.11. The notification should also include his or her telephone number. MPEP 601.03.

Applicant has failed to demonstrate that a timely Change of Correspondence Address was filed in this application. While the delay in filing a reply to the Notice may be found to have been unintentional, it cannot be said to have been unavoidable.

Alternate venue

If Applicant is unable to demonstrate the timely filing of a Change of Correspondence Address, Applicant is strongly urged to file a petition stating that the delay was unintentional. Public Law 97-247, § 3, 96 Stat. 317 (1982); which revised patent and trademark fees, amended 35 U.S.C. § 41(a)(7) to provide for the revival of an “unintentionally” abandoned application without a showing that the delay in was “unavoidable.” An “unintentional” petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b) must be accompanied by the required fee.

The filing of a petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b) cannot be intentionally delayed and therefore must be filed promptly. A person seeking revival due to unintentional delay can not make a statement that the delay was unintentional unless the entire delay, including the delay from the date it was discovered that the application was abandoned until the filing of the petition to revive under 37 CFR 1.137(b), was unintentional. A statement that the delay was unintentional is not appropriate if petitioner intentionally delayed the filing of a petition for revive under 37 CFR 1.137(b).

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

By mail: Director for Patents
PO Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

By FAX: (571) 273-8300
Attn: Office of Petitions

By hand: Customer Service Window
Randolph Building
401 Dulany Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Telephone inquiries concerning this matter should be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3232.

Derek L. Woods
Derek L. Woods
Attorney
Office of Petitions